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ABSTRACT

Language acquisition in bilingual communities is noted to be fundamentally distinct from other types of second language learning. Discussion centers about the multi-dialectal, bilingual speech community of Miami with respect to educational opportunities afforded the city's ethnic groups. The function and achievement of the Spanish Curricula Center is observed in terms of city-wide bilingual program development. (RL)

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SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN BILINGUAL COMMUNITIES

Sylvia H. Rothfarb

Paper presented at the annual conference, (December 1970)
of the AATSP: "FLES Through University Session."

Good morning. It is a great pleasure to be addressing you here in the beautiful city of San Francisco. The topic of my talk is "Second Language Learning in a Bilingual Community." Some of you may not come from a bilingual community, but could perhaps still recognize that there is more than one way of being bilingual.

In order for you to get acquainted with some of the sounds of Miami, which is rapidly becoming more and more bilingual, let's listen to this tape - and won't you write down on a piece of paper the languages and dialects you perceive? (Play tape Voices)[1]

If you have ten items listed, you are correct. The languages, dialects and people you have just heard were:

1) A male television announcer, Spanish-speaking, Cuban
2) A male radio announcer, Midland-English dialect speaker
3) A male radio announcer, Southern-English dialect speaker
4) A female television announcer, Spanish-speaking, Cuban
5) A male television announcer, Midland-English dialect speaker
6) A male television announcer, Spanish-speaking, Cuban
7) Cuban children speaking Spanish while playing
8) A Black English dialect speaker
9) A Yiddish speaker, female
10) A male teacher, Spanish-speaking, Cuban.

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We have just gone through two basic steps of Taba-type strategies: identifying and listing. If time and circumstances permitted, perhaps we would proceed together to the third step: that of grouping. If you were to group these languages and dialects, you might do it this way:

Group I	Group II	Group III
Midland English Dialect Southern English Dialect Black English Dialect	All the Spanish speakers	The Yiddish speaker

Or you might look for something you perceive the speakers as having in common, such as mixing: Black English interfering with white English Spanish plus English phrases, such as la avenida séis del southwest, English plus Yiddish, and finally Spanish plus a slang expression - no tiene plata. Or, if you were more interested in the situations during which the taping occurred, you might make these groups:

Group I	Group II	Group III
TV and Radio Announcers	In the classroom (The B. Eng. speaker leading the language practice; the Spanish teacher	In the street - the children playing

Group IV

In the store -
the lady shopping

The possible groups are as extensive as the number of people here today - the combinations as varied as the language concepts you bring with you. Given additional information on the settings of the tapings, and Miami in general, you would soon realize that Miami es a multi-dialectal, bi-lingual community.

The theoretical question of what are the components of a bilingual community has many dimensions. First let us consider Einar Haugen's viewpoints

in Bilingualism in the Americas:

> "The community or group to which an individual belongs will determine the conditions for his learning and use of languages; in such a group language is always a social instrument and may become a social symbol."[2]

If we accept this definition of language in terms of its social functions, then a bilingual person can seemingly identify with two speech communities. A monolingual living in a bilingual community is aware of the other community, but not necessarily a part of it. The depth of his interaction with the second community is contingent upon the amount of social, economical or educational contact he has with it.

Dell Hymes,[3] a leading sociolinguist of our times, sees the terms "speech community" as the equation of the terms language, culture and people. He further denotes it as a condition which can be seen as problematical when it co-occurs with more than one in a given community. To avoid this type of problem, many bilingual communities in America have followed a pattern of assimilation or acculturation of the minor community. In others "ghettos" or sections have been established where the so-called "minor" community functions - maintaining contact with the dominant language in many facets of everyday life.

But have we "avoided problems?" The history of America's giant melting-pot theory is too complex to be discussed here. Joshua Fishman's Language and Language Loyalty admirably describes it.[4] In many a history of language teaching, we are reminded of how sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage" just prior to the period William Moulton calls "linguistic isolationism."[5] And closer to home, how many Spanish-speaking Americans have been forbidden to utter a word in Spanish in their classrooms, in hallways, and even on the playground of their schools? And even still closer to home, how many FLES programs have failed to not only include, but to build their

curricula around the language and culture of the target speakers within their communities, as well as around that remote country where the language is spoken, thousands of miles and thousands of values away.

In recent years, Miami has been on the receiving end of two mass influxes: one emigrating and the other immigrating. The first is elderly and middle-age retirees from the north (hence the inclusion of the Yiddish excerpt on the tape). The second group consists of Cuban refugees, arriving twice daily on the Freedom Flights. It is not unusual for Dade County Schools to register and absorb 150 new Cuban youngsters in a given week. Since 1958 we have provided special classes for Orientation and ESL; in 1961 Spanish "S", or Spanish as vernacular language study, was added, so that the Cuban children would maintain their bilingualism. As you probably know, Dade County was the forerunner in organizing and implementing bilingual schools. New bilingual programs, encouraged and supported by the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII), have sprung up all around the country - from Calexico to Boston, from Miami to Newark, from San Antonio to Chicago. The objectives of these programs are to build on the child's native language, using it as a means of instruction, and to provide him with English instruction as well, so that he can (eventually) function comfortably in both languages.

Teachers of dialect speakers (i.e., Black English), have borrowed a page from foreign language and bilingual education's book. Today most current elementary English language texts acknowledge linguistic diversity, and there are many sources available for practicing patterns in Standard English, based on contrastive linguistic analysis. <u>These</u> youngsters, given the opportunity, can become bidialectal <u>and</u> bilingual.

With the awakened interest in bilingual education, the need for appropriate material for these programs soon became apparent. Textbooks and

workbooks produced in Spain or Latin America, although they have had to suffice for some time, were not too relevant and even pedagogically obsolete. In order to better meet the instructional needs of Spanish-English bilingual programs, the Spanish Curricula Development Center was planned. It was funded and operational by July 1, 1970. The purpose of the Center is to produce primary curricula for four target populations involved in Spanish-English bilingual programs throughout the United States. These are Mexican-Americans, Puerto Rican, Cuban and "Anglo" children. The curricula will be multi-disciplinary, hopefully innovative, and consist of five major strands: Spanish as a Vernacular, Social Science, Fine Arts, Science and Math, and Spanish as a Second Language. The project, which has as its able director Mr. Ralph F. Robinett, will last four years and produce 48 multidisciplinary, multimedia kits. I am delighted to be part of this project as Spanish SL Coordinator. Although the staff consists of the same ethnic population the center is designed to serve, additional regional 'centers' are being established in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and Western parts of the country, to further ensure linguistic and cultural authenticity appropriate for the given region. Thus we at the Center will include both 'pajita' and 'popote' (drinking straw) in the material and in the regional glossaries, but the regional centers will have the option of choosing or supplying the appropriate term.

What will the material for English-speakers look like? What any second language program in a bilingual community should look like. Charles Ferguson[6] has said that "second language learning takes place either by relatively informal, unplanned imitation and use in actual communication situations or by formal study in a system of education...It is up to educators to make the acquisition of languages either as much like the natural learning as possible or seek superior methods."

The student learning Spanish in a bilingual community has numerous opportunities for involvement in target language interaction. Given the type of language instruction that will build on available language experiences, he has the option of using the language in a variety of circumstances. Or he may choose to remain passive when hearing the language outside of his class, and silently add whatever he hears to his growing repertoire of Spanish. For him it is not a foreign language, in the traditional sense of the word. His situation is similar to the student of French in a Maine town near the French-Canadian border, or the student of Hebrew in Brooklyn. With a flick of the wrist he can tune into the variety of spoken Spanish you heard earlier. Or our student can play with those children you also heard earlier on the tape. And perhaps we can take him from the passive world to the active one, by providing him with the language tools he needs, so that he can respond spontaneously in Spanish. I hope so.

We all use tape recorders in our language classes - but how many of us walk around the community - record its sounds on tape, bring it back to the classroom, and LISTEN to it? In this age of down-to-earth, gut-level involvement, why not have the students bring in the kinds of situations they would like to participate in - starting with a tape and building the language lessons from there? This is something language curriculum planners, as well as language teachers, could look into. If your 'behavioral objective' is for the student to be able to

> "use authentic speech in the target language while playing games, as evidenced by giving appropriate oral rejoinders..."[7]

then your program should include a variety of games and ample opportunities for the child to use the language as spontaneously as possible.

We have a very special obligation in a bilingual community. We are not only interested in perpetuating linguistic and cultural diversity, but in promoting an appreciation of the other language and culture of the community. We are also encouraging the learning of our second language among English-speakers in what may be considered the optimum learning situation: second language learning in a bilingual community.

Thank you.

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